

The Real News

January 2010 Volume 288

In this issue!

The Oakville, Milton and District Real Estate Board

Competition Bureau challenges MLS® rules

The federal Competition Bureau says it will challenge the restrictive rules that govern the multiple listing service (MLS) system used by most Canadian home sellers to list their properties. Read more inside...



Revised Forecast for 2010

The Canadian Real Estate Association has revised its forecast for home sales via the MLS® Systems of Canadian real estate boards in 2010, and extended the forecast to 2011.



Annual activity in 2010 is forecast to be well above the previous year's level ... **To read the full report visit our website at www.ondreb.on.ca - 'What's New' or www.realtorlink.ca**

Mark these dates in your calendar!

Plans are already in the works for OMDREB's annual Golf Tournament and Tradeshow...

Golf Tournament June 15, 2010

Tradeshow September 16, 2010

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President's Message

Jeff Mahannah



Hello fellow OMDREB Members,

In January, the Board of Directors gathered for a two day strategic planning session. It was a full agenda that saw us reviewing last year's accomplishments and evaluating future initiatives. Very simply put, we looked at where the organization is now and where we would like to be in the future and how we are going to get there. The "strategic" part of this planning process was the Board of Directors looking at the current status of the organization, up-coming changes and the external environment -- and how this will affect our future.

We took a wide look around at what's going on outside the organization and a hard look at what's going on inside the organization, including its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. There was also much discussion around the overall direction and goals of the Board, as well a look at resources. Many questions were asked... What resources are needed to reach our goals? How much money is needed to procure or develop those resources? Ultimately our goals are determined by the content of various budgets, so it was very evident that one of the initiatives from the Strategic Planning Session was to set a Revenue Diversification Task Force to examine and bring back recommendations to the Board.

Going hand-in-hand with the Revenue Diversification Task Force is the re-appointment of the Vision Task Force. The Task Force will develop a long term Strategic Plan for the Board and look at what is the futures of Real Estate Boards, and where do we want to be? As well, they will examine the integrity, autonomy and value of added services for the Membership.

We have also combined the Public Relations Committee with the Government Relations Committee so that more emphasis can be directed towards external relations and the Programme Committee was re-named the Events Committee and they will be explore additional social and professional development opportunities.

This year's Strategic Planning Objectives:

- Increase internal and external awareness of OMDREB and its activities.
- Diversify revenue streams in order to execute the Board's Mission, while ensuring financial stability.
- Continue to develop and implement Member Services to retain and attract Members.
- Fully develop and utilize our technology infrastructure.
- Evaluate human resources structure required to deliver strategies and goals.
- Demonstrate leadership in determining OMDREB's participation in emerging future trends.

As you can see, the Board has set out some very ambitious objectives this year. I look forward to reporting back to you on the direction and decisions we will be making, as the year progresses.

Sincerely,

Jeff Mahannah
President, OMDREB

MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Volunteers needed for OMDREB Committees

Needed - motivated leaders that will bring to the Board their experience, knowledge and skills.

Join an OMDREB Committee and be ready to take on the issues of the day and assist in building organizational strength - well into the future.

The following committees are looking for volunteers:

By-Law Committee

Discipline Committee

Events Committee (formerly Programme)

External Affairs Committee (Public & Government Relations)

Leadership Development Committee

Member Services Committee

Professional Standards Committee

Trade Show Committee

Please contact the appropriate Committee Chair if you are interested in volunteering.

Leadership 100

Becoming a Valuable Committee Member

In this **FREE** online course you'll learn the roles and responsibilities of association leaders, how to become a valuable committee Member and ways to make your volunteer time meaningful and productive.

For more information, contact The OREA Centre for Leadership Development, at www.orea.com/leadership



2010 Committee Chairs

Arbitration Committee

Glen Thomas

By-Law Committee

Chris Abbott

Commercial Committee

Aziz Kanjee

Discipline Committee

Glen Thomas

Education Committee

Chris Abbott

Events Committee

Heather Tilley & Alun Evans

External Affairs Committee

*Government Relations & Public Relations

Dianna Morrison

Finance Committee

Alexx Coelho

Leadership Development

Jenny Kotulak

Managing Broker's Council

Walt Jurgen

Member Services Committee

Heather Tilley & Alun Evans

MLS® Committee

Jack McCrudden

Professional Standards

Chris Abbott

Trade Show Committee

Sue Coleman

Milton Task Force

Glen Thomas

Revenue Diversification Task Force

Alexx Coelho

Vision Task Force

Aziz Kanjee

2010 Information Seminar

Thank you to all who attended the **2010 CMHC Housing Outlook & Town of Oakville Information Seminar** and our volunteers and sponsors.

The event was sold out with over 325 attendees.

Sponsors

ACISS HOME & COMMERCIAL INSPECTION CONSULTANTS

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PRESENTS WITH DESIGN

BRASH AVENUES



Thanks to Don Bassindale and Pat Cooper for their assistance and a special thank you to Tom Au Yeung, Heather Tilley and Hans Taal for their assistance with the 50/50 draw in support of the Haiti Crisis. \$530 was raised for charity and \$530 was awarded to Tom Au Yeung. Congratulations!!

*Information on the **Oakville/GTA Housing Market Outlook 2010 Report** can be found **online** at www.ombreb.on.ca - on the front page - 'What's New'.*

Managing Brokers' Council

Friday, February 19 at 9:00 a.m. at the Board office.

Virginia Tinti, local solicitor specializing in residential real estate, will be providing OMDREB Members with a briefing about the HST. Virginia will be focusing exclusively on the implications of HST on the real estate brokerage and there will be time for Q&A as well.

We look forward to seeing many of our Managing Brokers on February 19th. If you have yet to RSVP for this meeting, please do so, via email, to jessicad@ombreb.on.ca

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 9:00 a.m. | Welcome
Review of OMDREB Strategic Objectives for 2010
Update on Individual Billing |
| 9:30 a.m. | HST and its implications for the Real Estate Brokerage
Q & A |
| 10:00 a.m. | Conclusion |



CREA DISAPPOINTED BY BUREAU TRIBUNAL FILING

The Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) learned on February 8, 2010 that the Competition Bureau filed a Notice of Application with the Competition Tribunal against CREA.

“CREA views the Commissioner’s decision as surprising and disappointing,” said Dale Ripplinger, President of CREA. “We do not agree with the Bureau’s position that certain CREA rules are anti-competitive, either as a matter of fact or as a matter of law. CREA’s rules allow for innovative business models and provide a broad range of choice for consumers.”

In good faith, CREA engaged in settlement negotiations with the Competition Bureau for several months in an effort to arrive at a consensual resolution. Unfortunately, the parties were unable to reach an agreement. This is very disappointing, since CREA has consistently indicated - right from the outset - that it has always been prepared to work with the Competition Bureau to revise its rules to clarify the way the rules operate.

Last week, CREA advised the Commissioner of Competition that CREA had made the business decision to move forward with rule changes to address the issues raised by the Bureau, whether or not a settlement with the Bureau could be reached.

“In making these clarifications on a proactive basis, CREA believes that it is fully addressing the Competition Bureau’s concerns, while ensuring the accuracy and quality of MLS® information that Canadians have come to trust and REALTOR® compliance with a code of ethics” said Ripplinger.

The Commissioner’s press release states that CREA’s rules restrict consumer choice and prevent innovative business models. That is simply false. CREA is disappointed that the Bureau would make this statement in view of the months of discussions about CREA’s rules and CREA’s consistent position that its rules are not intended to and do not restrict any business models.

The real estate industry in Canada is highly competitive and thrives on small businesses with independent agents, brokers and franchises conducting a wide variety of transactions every day. CREA currently has more than 98,000 members operating independently across the country to compete for consumer business, offering a wide array of services and pricing structures.

“CREA’s interest and that of its members is to ensure consumers have choice, that they are protected during one of the most significant transactions they will undertake, and that the integrity of the MLS® system is preserved for the benefit of REALTORS® and the Canadian public” added Ripplinger.



To stay informed the above button has been added to our website and our page at Realtorlink for Members:

www.ombdreb.on.ca

www.realtorlink.ca

We understand that media coverage of this issue has raised a number of questions and concerns, particularly regarding speculation on how such proposed changes could affect you and your business. Unfortunately not all media coverage is accurate and does not fully reflect CREA’s position. CREA is actively explaining its position and correcting inaccuracies.

Given that CREA is now facing litigation, it is extremely important that there be proper coordination regarding communications and that a uniform message is conveyed.

As such, we’ve created this Competition Bureau Information Zone to act as your online resource for accurate and current information related to the Competition Bureau’s action against CREA, including CREA activities and actions.

CREA will be regularly updating content as the situation changes to provide you with the most up-to-date and accurate information.



REALTORS® can now participate in the Employment Insurance (EI) program.

Human Resources and Skills Development Minister Diane Finley, Rob Moore, Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism joined with Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) CEO Pierre Beauchamp to announce at the beginning of February, that self-employed REALTORS® can now participate in the Employment Insurance (EI) program.



“From coast-to-coast-coast, a large majority of REALTORS® are self-employed,” says Mr. Beauchamp. “By creating a level playing field within the EI program, many of our members will no longer have to worry about taking time away from their careers to have a baby or care for a family member who is gravely ill.”

Bill C-56, the Fairness for the Self-Employed Act, extends EI benefits for self-employed REALTORS® for:

- **Maternity benefits** (15 weeks maximum), which are available to mothers and cover the period surrounding birth (a claim can start up to eight weeks before the expected birth date);
- **Parental/adoptive benefits** (35 weeks maximum), which are available to biological or adoptive parents while they are caring for a newborn or newly adopted child, and may be taken by either parent or shared between them;
- **Sickness benefits** (15 weeks maximum), which may be paid to a person who is unable to work because of sickness, injury or quarantine; and
- **Compassionate care benefits** (six weeks maximum), which may be paid to persons who have to be away from work temporarily to provide care or support to a family member who is gravely ill with a significant risk of death.

Self-employed Canadians who voluntarily opt in to the EI program are eligible to collect benefits as early as January 1, 2011.

REALTORS® who opt in to the program will pay the same EI premium rate as salaried employees in their Province. They will not be required to pay the employer portion of premiums, which takes into account the fact they will not have access to EI regular benefits. Premiums, and resulting benefits, will be based on income.

Have you joined?

Facebook – Become a friend of CREA <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=50028536830>

Twitter – You can now follow CREA <http://twitter.com/creanews>

LinkedIn – Join the CREA group <http://www.linkedin.com/groups>

Property Assessment in Ontario

The Government of Ontario has made a number of changes to the property assessment system that went into effect in the 2009 property tax year. These changes include the introduction of a four-year assessment update cycle and a phase-in of assessment increases.

Currently, the assessed value of properties in Ontario is based on a January 1, 2008 valuation date. MPAC's last province-wide assessment update took place in 2008 and was based on a January 1, 2008 valuation date.

To provide an additional level of property tax stability and predictability, the market increases in assessed value between 2005 and 2008 will be phased-in over four years. The phase-in program does not apply to decreases in assessed value. Any market decrease in the value of a property is applied immediately and reflected on your most recent Property Assessment Notice. The change in assessed values and the phased-in assessment values for the 2009 to 2012 property tax years are listed on the 2008 Notices. There is a difference between the 2008 Current Value Assessment (CVA) (the destination value) and the current year's phase-in value. The current year (which can be 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2012 taxation year) phase-in value is the assessed amount that the municipalities or the local tax authorities use to calculate the annual property taxes. An example of this is as follows:

Current year (2010) Phase-in CVA=\$250,000
Total Municipal Tax Rate= 1 %
Total Municipal Tax burden = \$250,000 x 1 %= \$2,500.

The 2008 CVA is not used until 2012 since this is the destination value.

The municipalities/local taxing authorities set property tax rates and the province sets the education tax rate. MPAC's assessed values are used to determine these taxes.

How MPAC Assesses Properties

MPAC's mandated role is to accurately value and classify all Ontario properties in compliance with the Assessment Act and related regulations. To establish a property's assessed value, MPAC analyzes property sales in a community to determine the CVA. This method is used by most assessment jurisdictions in Canada and throughout the world. When assessing a residential property, they look at all of the key features that affect market value. Five major factors usually account for 85% of the value: location; lot dimensions; living area; age of the structure(s), adjusted for any major renovations or additions; and quality of construction. Examples of other features that may affect a property's value include: number of bathrooms; fireplaces; finished basements; garages and pools. Site features can also increase or decrease the assessed value of your property such as traffic patterns; being situated on a corner lot; and proximity to a golf course, hydro corridor, railway or green space.

For more information on how MPAC assesses a property, visit www.mpac.ca.



2010 OMDREB CONTINUING EDUCATION

Course	Dates	Location/Time	Registration	Additional Information
RECO Real Estate Update Residential	March 1 April 5 July 6	Contact OREA for location 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	OREA 1.866.411.6732	6 CE MANDATORY
Canada Revenue - Real Estate Industry Tax Information	February 18	OMDREB Classroom 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	OMDREB 905.844.6491	3 CE
Achieving Success Through Attention to Detail	February 23	OMDREB Classroom 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	OMDREB 905.844.6491	3 CE
Bookkeeping & Record Keeping for the Real Estate Professional	March 3	OMDREB Classroom 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	OMDREB 905.844.6491	3 CE
Canada Revenue - Real Estate Industry Tax Information <i>Sponsored by ACISS</i>	March 11	OMDREB Classroom 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	OMDREB 905.844.6491	3 CE
Microsoft Word 2007	March 16	OMDREB Classroom 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	OMDREB 905.844.6491	2 CE
Excel 2007	March 18	OMDREB Classroom 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	OMDREB 905.844.6491	2 CE
MPAC & Property Assessment	March 25	OMDREB Classroom 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	OMDREB 905.844.6491	2 CE
Presenting Multiple Offers and More <i>Sponsored by ACISS</i>	March 30	OMDREB Classroom 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	OMDREB 905.844.6491	3 CE

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